

MOVE MOVIE, MOTHER PRODUCTION AND STUDIOCANAL PRESENT

Lou!

A film written and directed by
JULIEN NEEL

(based on his own comic book LOU!
published by Éditions Glénat)

with
LUDIVINE SAGNIER
KYAN KHOJANDI
LOLA LASSERON
With the participation of
NATHALIE BAYE



#LOULEFILM



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Runtime: 104 minutes

French release: 8 October 2014

 #LOULEFILM





synopsis



LOU is 12. She's creative and dreamy, and lives at home with her mom in "an orange building with lots of little balconies that lead to the roof." She's been best friends with Mina since daycare, and she's been in love with Tristan, her neighbor, since preschool. Her mom has set aside her own personal life over the past few years to dedicate herself to her daughter, but their little bubble bursts when Mom starts a new relationship and Lou finally plucks up the courage to speak to Tristan...

LOU! is a story about girls, with some boys in it, of course, and an oddball neighborhood full of colors and things that don't exist anywhere else.

An interview with Julien Neel

Director



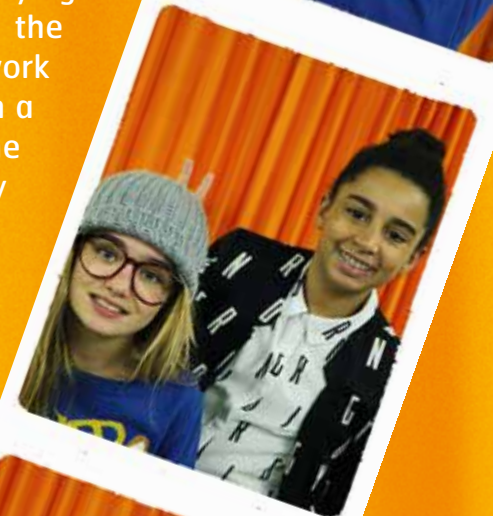
So just like that, after making a name for yourself in comic books, you then turn your hand to movie making?

It's a different way of telling stories and I've liked telling stories ever since I was a small boy, because my mom read to me a lot and we had lots of comic books at home thanks to my dad. Stories were like little tents – I'd hide away in them so I wouldn't have to see the real world all around. I would spend hours at home making little books in which I started telling my own stories. I've been wanting to make movies since I was about 10.

A friend of mine, Nicolas, saw Steven Spielberg's film DUEL on TV and he told me about it. I'd missed the film so instead, I drew it in a comic book of around 30 pages. It wasn't perhaps my best work, but my teacher liked it so much that she used it to justify me skipping a grade, despite me being a bit of a birdbrain. Later on, I saved up my money to buy an Amiga 1000 PC to create cartoons using Deluxe Paint software...

And you made a career out of it?

My father and my grandfather were both illustrators, so it was fairly natural for me to think of telling stories as a proper job. When I used to watch them draw, I could measure the effort and time spent constructing an illusion, pencil stroke after pencil stroke. Later on, in parallel to my 'normal' job, I filled sketchbooks and kept on producing comic books, puppets, silly songs and cartoons with friends who were as obsessed as I was. I ended up dedicating myself entirely to short films and video games, and trying to make a living from it. Then the director of the Tchô Collection at Éditions Glénat saw my work on the internet and asked me to come up with a concept for a comic book series. LOU! was the result. I'd just had my daughter, Maïa, and my partner and I had thought of calling her Lou. A few years later, Harold Valentin and Bruno Lévy came to ask me if I was interested in adapting LOU! for the cinema. What a question! As if I was going to turn down a new way for telling a story...





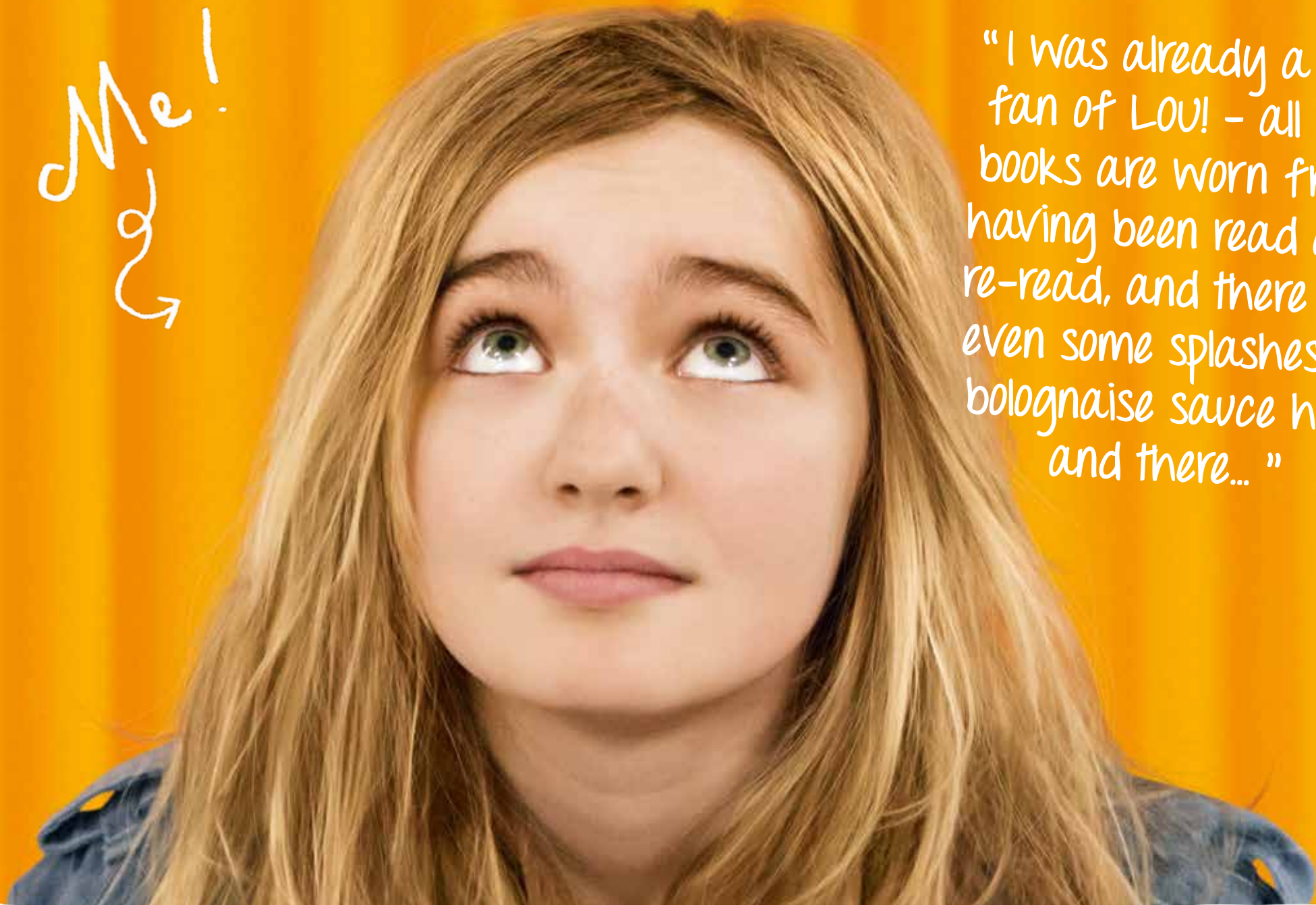


Once upon a time,
a very successful
comic book came to life...

The two producers of this movie – Harold Valentin, who is producing his first feature film here through his company Mother Production; and Bruno Lévy, who has produced films for Cédric Klapisch and Anne Le Ny among others – have something in common: they both like working with authors. So they never even questioned the fact that LOU! would be adapted for the big screen by Julien Neel and nobody else. But the writing phase initially set off down the wrong path. The original idea was to adapt volume 4 of LOU!, which was very cinematographic in its layout. But after several long months of hard work, helped by his writing coach Marc Syrigas, Julien Neel realized that he wanted to return to the starting point of the comic book series, and tackle Lou's relationship with her mother. So he wrote an original screenplay, without adapting a specific volume, instead focusing on the universe of Lou and her mother, their neighborhood, their emotions and their relationship.

Me!
→

"I was already a big fan of LOU! - all my books are worn from having been read and re-read, and there are even some splashes of bolognaise sauce here and there..."



SEEKING: A 12 year-old with blond hair, a big personality and creativity, but with a touch of shyness. She must be natural, appealing and walk with grace.

5,000 girls responded to the ad.

3,000 came to an open casting call. They were narrowed down based on their photo and their email application.

500 came to the casting day.

WE FOUND OUR FAVORITE: LOLA LASSERON



*Are you LOU?
Casting of a
young heroine...*

Before LOU!, I'd been in a TV movie and some other little things, hidden camera stuff... I was really stressed at the casting. I was the only brunette and that was pretty off-putting!



Mom
↳

"I tried to make the character believable in terms of her quirkiness and paradoxical behavior, and to make her touching at times, and a little crazy at others."



Mom : Ludivine Sagnier

She's got such a long fringe that you can hardly make out her eyes. She's devoted to her daughter, she's a little crazy, she's nuts about video games and she's writing a sci-fi novel about Sidéra, a warrior-girl of the cosmos.

I'm mainly known for my roles in auteur films, having worked with Miller, Chabrol, Corneau and Honoré. And now I get to be in a real comedy!

When my agent told me about the project, I called my 11-year-old niece and asked her if she'd heard of LOU! "Of course I have!" she replied.

I bought the comic books and I loved them.

I wanted this role. I hassled Julien to get it. I even sung him the theme tune to Mario!

Lots of things are in the comic book, but not in the film. There is a huge amount of material that had to be implicitly worked into the personality, the life and the flaws in my character.

I tried to stop it slipping into caricature.

Did you feel close to the character?

I was touched by her determination to be happy whatever the cost, despite her raising her daughter on her own. That's a struggle I can relate to.



New
neighbor?
→

"Richard is
overwhelmed by
his fear of not
doing the right
thing. This guy has
pure goodwill."

Richard lives in the apartment next door to Lou and her mom. As soon as he moved there, Lou starts imagining the relationship he might have with her mom. Richard always wears a sheepskin vest that comes from his hometown where he used to do curling.

I lost six kilos for the role. I was a little rounder in "Bref".

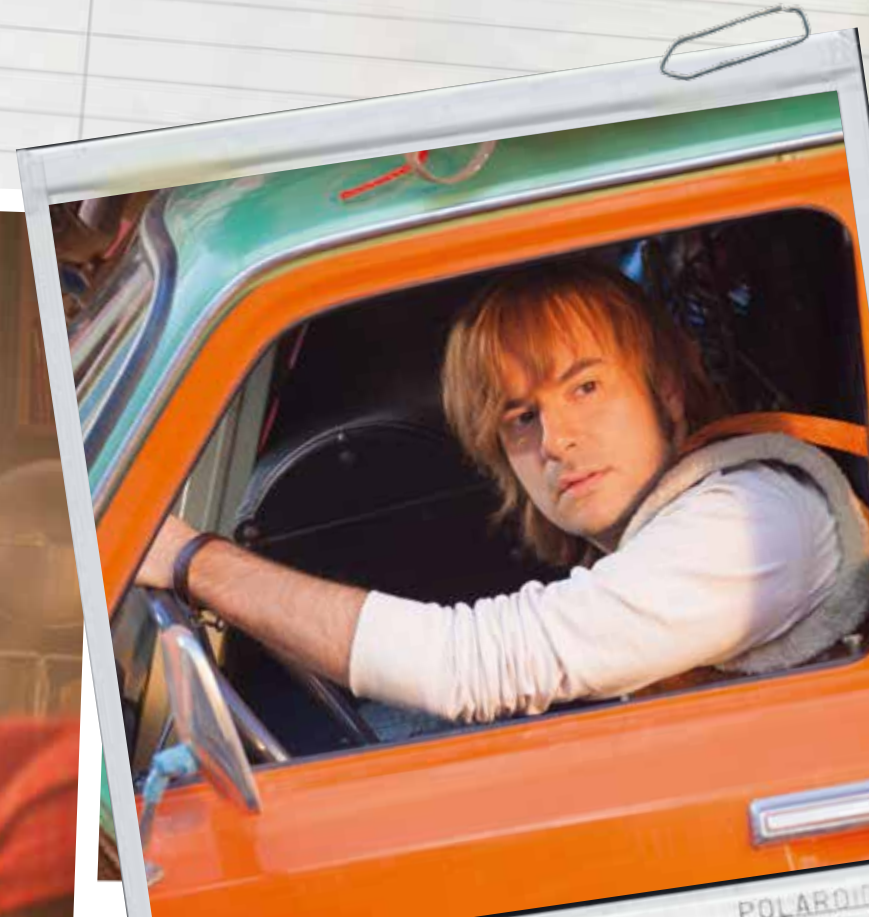
He is always being judged, and there is quite a lot of aggression towards him. He's only happy when he's at home in his cocoon.

Working with Nathalie Baye was pretty impressive. I haven't been acting for so long, and I was amazed by her humility and her desire to be sincere in everything she does, even if her character is a little preposterous.

It's something I try to do, too, and she inspired me on the set.

I thought the suitcase of shame was awesome, with everything inside. My couch is my suitcase of shame.

Richard, the neighbor
(and more):
Kyan Khojandi



My Mom's Mom!

"I'd never played a character before who required so much invention."





In the comic book, she has no name. She's a woman of (unpleasant) character, she doesn't like much, especially her neighbor, and the only thing she can cook is Brussels sprouts. I'd never played a character before who required so much invention.

The Grandma: Nathalie Baye

Outwardly, the grandma is pretty caricatured, but I had to get over that caricature in order to give her some truth and sincerity.

When I saw the costumes, I didn't hesitate for a second. My own Grandma had the same coat as my character, a little like a blanket, kind of wooly, and a little puffy. Even if you stand up straight, those coats make you look like you're hunchbacked! And the shoes – like men's shoes but with heels! It was kind of emotional for me. But I have to say my own grandma was kinder than Lou's.

I don't think she likes men very much. I don't think she's very fulfilled, if you know what I mean!

I knew Ludivine as we'd worked together before. She had already played my daughter in a film, so it was easy working with her.

Julien is someone who generates attention. I was quite surprised to see that despite never having worked in movies before, he was very good at charming the whole crew, getting us to respond to his meticulous requirements and transporting us into his world.



LOU IS ABOUT A LOOK



LOU

Lou sews her own clothes, she makes stuff, customizes it, and mixes styles and accessories without worrying about what other people might think. The wardrobe department scavenged far and wide to end up with a patchwork of pieces to create her unique look that is both vintage and modern at the same time. Lou has a total of 38 costume changes in the film, including 14 just for the scene at junior high.



MOM

In the comic book, Lou's mom has an iconic style with blue pants and a red sweater that we naturally used in the film. Then we added some key pieces such as a slightly worn robe, her green coat and an evening dress made by Lou. For her glasses, we bought around 40 pairs online before finding the right ones in the window of an optician's store.



Richard

There is no Richard without his famous “dead sheepskin” vest, and it was made especially for the movie (of course!).



The Grandma

Nothing glam about this grandma! A wool coat, lace-up shoes, and a brown dress for this somewhat abrasive character.





Little references

Fans of the comic book will immediately spot the man with the chicken, the family walking that is none other than Julien Neel's real family, and the mailwoman from volume six, who could only be played by Enora, who runs Lou's fan club through the I love Lou very much Facebook page.

Lou's world...

Lou's world, the apartment where she lives with her mom and the town in which it is located are influenced by a range of styles including pop culture and contemporary art, Bauhaus architecture, Japanese animations like "Tekkonkinkreet", movies like BLADE RUNNER or even THE PARTY, the films of Jacques Tati. They all paid a great deal of attention to their locations.

...is a timeless place...

We are not in any specific time here. It could be the 60s, the 80s, or even 2030! The varied influences are mixed up and superimposed, resulting in the unique reality of Lou's world. The laser game isn't necessarily a real laser game, rather a blend of pop-style inflatable modules. The laundromat makes you think of a vintage spaceship, and the animated images created to illustrate the moments when Lou's mom is writing her novel have an uncanny resemblance to Japanese cartoons of the 1980s.



...that is unidentifiable

There are no real brands or logos in LOU! Books, cans of soda, cereal boxes, vinyl records, the video games Lou's mom so loves – all the logos and brands have been recreated and the packaging has been made up. We'll see a Super Mario pizzaiolo, Grape Man and scooters made from wicker.

In LOU! everything is there for a reason

containing all her finds, where she sticks photos and spicy sauce wrappers from Chez Gino, and notes down everything Tristan does

- Chez Gino, the half-Chinese trattoria... with its huge ceiling lights made from red colanders, the macramé cushions that look like pizzas, the plastic crispy ducks hanging in the window beside the salamis, and the gondolas, including the wooden one with the little dancer inside.



Hitchcock-style lighting...

Julien Neel took his inspiration for the lighting from films entirely shot in the studio such as ROPE and MARNIE, from stylized American musicals in Technicolor and from the films of Quentin Dupieux in terms of his framing and focus. With studio lighting and deliberately saturated colors, there's no point looking for reality here.

cast



Mom
Richard
Lou

With the participation of
With the participation of

Mina
Tristan
Marie-Émilie
Karine
Jean-Jean
Preston
Manolo
Jocelyne
Gino
Henry
Robert

Ludivine Sagnier
Kyan Khojandi
Lola Lasseron
Nathalie Baye in the role of The Grandma
Julie Ferrier in the role of Sophie

Eden Hoch
Joshua Mazé
Lily Taïeb
Léa Nataf
Virgile Hurard
Téo Yacoub
Sacha Vassort
Anne Agbadou-Masson
Winston Ong
François Rollin
Pierre Rousselet





crew

Directed by
Produced by

Julien Neel
Bruno Lévy
Harold Valentin

Associate producer
Screenplay
Adaption and dialog

Aurélien Larger
Julien Neel and Marc Syrigas
Julien Neel

Based on LOU! by Julien Neel,
published by Éditions Glénat

First assistant director
Script editor
Casting

Nicolas Cambois
Anne Wermelinger
Elsa Pharaon

Production manager
Director of photography
Set photography
Sound

Sylvie Peyre
Pierre Milon
Emmanuelle Jacobson-Roques
Frédéric De Ravignan

Costume designer
Head of wardrobe

Olivier Bériot
Marylin Fitoussi

Make up
Set design

Manuela Taco
Sylvie Olive (A.D.C)

Special effects

Cédric Fayolle - Tchook

Choreography of "Dance of Joy"

Mai-Thu Chapiron

Original music

Julien Di Caro

Post-production manager

Doris Yoba

Editing

Yannick Kergoät

Sound editing

Frédéric Demolder



A MOVE MOVIE – MOTHER PRODUCTION – STUDIOCANAL
CINÉFRANCE 1888 – FRANCE 2 CINÉMA – SCOPE PICTURES coproduction